

Following the Leader

Management, Recruitment, Retention,
and Professional Development
Strategies for a Legal and Effective
Special Education Organization

ICASE Fall 2018

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Live from the studio...



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With our war correspondents reporting from the field...



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**GREENWOOD
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL
CORPORATION**

Roadmap

- Built-In Opportunities for Leadership under Article 7
- Recruitment and Retention
- New Compensation Tools
- School Climate/ Environmental Supports
- Other Creative Recruitment/Retention Solutions
- Professional Development/Training

**Built-In
Opportunities for
Leadership under
Article 7**

Public Agency Representative

511 IAC 7-42-3

(a) For each CCC meeting, the public agency must designate a representative who:

(1) is:

(A) knowledgeable about the availability of, and has the authority to commit, resources of the public agency;

(B) qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities; and

(C) knowledgeable about the general education curriculum; and

(2) may be any public agency participant of the CCC if the criteria of subdivision (1) are satisfied.

Importance of PAR

- First person listed in Article 7 under case conference participants
- Ultimate decisionmaker?
- Most common complaint that “mandated participant wasn’t there” = PAR
- If you don’t make it clear who the PAR is and what their role is, Parents can become convinced that PAR is not there. *CP-089-2015*.
- “I’m the public agency representative, or PAR. The law requires someone from the school district to be here that knows about the curriculum and resources and is authorized to commit district resources. That’s me!”
- Using SLP as PAR for speech-only kids?

How do they lead?

Assure Student’s Overall Needs Are Met

Multidisciplinary Team

511 IAC 7-32-65

"Multidisciplinary team" means the group of qualified professionals who conduct a student's educational evaluation with input from the student's parent. The qualified professionals include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) At least one (1) teacher licensed in, or other specialist with knowledge in, the area of suspected disability.

Multidisciplinary Team

511 IAC 7-32-65

(2) A school psychologist, except...for a student with a suspected:

(A) developmental delay...at least two (2) qualified professionals from different disciplines based upon the needs of the student;

(B) language impairment...a speech-language pathologist and at least one (1) qualified professional from a different discipline based upon the needs of the student; or

(C) speech impairment only...a speech-language pathologist may serve as the sole qualified professional on the multidisciplinary team.

Multidisciplinary Team

511 IAC 7-32-65

(3) For a student with a suspected specific learning disability. . .

(4) For a student who is blind or has low vision, is deaf or hard of hearing, or has suspected multiple disabilities, . . .

How do they lead?

Compile Student Data Key to Eligibility and Programming for Student

Special Ed Director

511 IAC 7-42-8(a)(2)

(a) The services identified in an IEP must be provided:

(1) No later than ten (10) instructional days after parental consent to the student's initial IEP is received.

(2) On the eleventh instructional day after a public agency provides written notice described in section 7 of this rule regarding a student's proposed IEP that is subsequent to the initial IEP, unless the parent consents in writing to an earlier implementation date. The public agency must continue to implement the current IEP if the parent challenges the proposed IEP prior to its implementation by:

Special Ed Director

511 IAC 7-42-8(a)(2)

- (A) requesting and participating in a meeting with an official of the public agency who has the authority to facilitate the disagreement between the parent and the public agency;
- (B) initiating mediation under 511 IAC 7-45-2;
or
- (C) requesting a due process hearing under 511 IAC 7-45-3.

Special Ed Director as Leader

Gatekeeper of Due Process

Mentor

Exemplar

Sounding Board

Hard to make a list because everything you do sets the stage for others in your district!

Report from Special Correspondent Dr. Angie Balsley

Earlywood Educational Services Executive Director

- 2018 Dissertation: *Special Education Directors' Experiences Preventing & Responding to Requests for Due Process Hearings*
- Qualitative study of 10 Indiana special education directors
- Key findings:



Pro-Active Leadership Actions

Special education directors who avoided due process:

1. Attended to relationships with families
 - Prioritized availability and response time* (while balancing need for thoughtfulness in communications)
 - Attended community events for children with special needs
 - Told families to use Director as a resource- you can be called upon in times of need
 - Expressed empathy
 - Built a customer service-oriented culture
 - Trained staff to control ego, control emotions, not “dig heels in.”
FOCUS ON STUDENT.
 - Brought in an advocate or neutral third party when appropriate

Pro-Active Leadership Actions

Special education directors who avoided due process:

2. Early awareness of concerns

- Communication system leading up to directors, esp. from principals

3. Trained stakeholders

- Training in substance
- Training in communication

4. Used alternative dispute resolution procedures before due process hearing request

Leadership in Language

Talking to Parents

“You are the most important voice here. We need to hear from you.”

“You know your child better than anyone.”

“You are a very vocal advocate for your child, and we need that.”

**Report from Special
Correspondent
Dr. Laura Hammack,
Brown Co. Supt.**



Recruitment + Retention

How do we get, and keep, the best
special educators?

The Overall Problem

Nationwide

- Of 59 educator fields, 11 had considerable shortages. 6 of those 11 were special educators.
- 98% of districts nationwide report shortages in special education teachers

Indiana

- Enrollment in teaching programs and those graduating with teaching degrees declined 37% between 2004-14

The Magnified Special Ed. Problem

- Special ed teachers leave the profession at twice the rate of their general ed counterparts
- Large caseloads, high paperwork demands
- In rural districts, male teachers, teachers who have a higher postsecondary degree, and teachers with more experience are harder than others to recruit

And Related Service Providers

- Anecdotal data shows related services providers are so rare that many rural schools are contracting for twice the cost of a direct hire
- Tele-therapies working, especially for speech/language?
- Many IA and School Psych positions are going unfilled, putting IEP compliance at risk

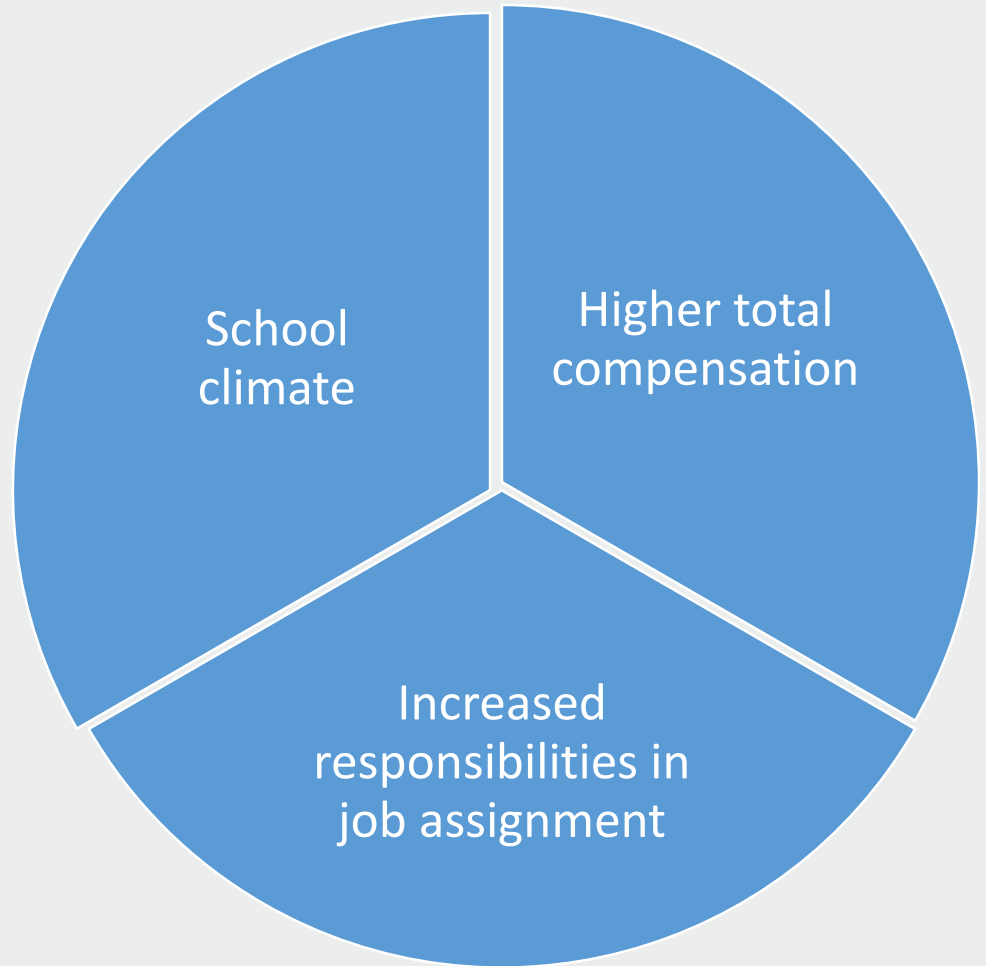
Let's go to an eyewitness...

What positions are the hardest for your district to fill/maintain?

Strategies making an impact or that you'd like to try?

The Solution

**Biggest
indicators
of
recruitment
and
retention:**



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New Compensation Tools

Supplemental Payments

I.C. 20-28-9-1.5

Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, a school corporation may provide a supplemental payment to a special education professional in excess of the salary specified in the school corporation's compensation plan

- Can take various forms, such as sign on or “stay on” bonuses**
- No established definition for special education professional, so can broadly approach.**
- For certificated (teacher bargaining unit) positions, required subject of discussion, not bargaining**

Academic Needs Salary Differentiation

Beginning with 18-19, bargained compensation models may award varying amounts of salary increase as “Academic Needs of Students where the basis for the salary increase is:

- **Subjects taught by a given teacher**
- **Importance of retaining a given teacher at the school corporation**
- **Need to attract an individual with specific qualifications to fill a teaching vacancy.**

Can be applied mid-year. Intended to complement new hire salary flexibility.

Examples of Academic Needs Salary Differentiation

Salary of a teacher or teachers can be adjusted...

- anywhere on the salary range based on the Academic Needs of Students, defined as the importance of retaining teachers in areas established by the superintendent as hard-to-fill/hard-to-keep.
- up to \$X each year above the teacher(s) previous salary
for up to # of positions
utilizing a total pool of \$X for these increases
- “Stay-on bonus” over a # of years

But What If I'm Not on the Bargaining Team?!

- You are a leader in your organization
- Dollars aren't going to be funneled to your programs if you don't champion it.
- Armed with this new understanding, you can effectively communicate this message and the importance of this problem and potential solution with your district's bargaining team members.

But What If I'm Not on the Bargaining Team?!

And if your impassioned plea on recruitment and retention issues doesn't reach them, remind them that special education is one of the most litigated and most resource-intensive forms of litigation a school faces, and a lack of qualified special ed. staff leads directly to compliance failures, which leads directly to intensive litigation.

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School Climate/ Environmental Supports

Creative Recruitment

Most consistent indicator of teacher retention is school culture

- Collaborate with HR staff to assure all possible steps are being taken to gain candidate commitment and quick and smooth “onboarding” so new staff immediately begin to think of your school as their work home
- Encourage parents active in the district to consider paraprofessional positions, leading to employees with a long-term investment and ownership approach to working in your school

Effective Mentors

- Trained, frequent face-to-face feedback, small caseload, consistent data.
- Don't stop mentoring teachers after their 1st or 2nd year
- Consider e-mentoring (ex: Kansas schools using New Teacher Center based in California).
- Additional mentoring/support for teachers who work with students who have more significant disabilities (ex: Georgia)
- Placing teachers in mentoring roles may be beneficial to retention.
- Allow team teaching

Not all Mentors are Good Mentors

- High-quality, trained instructional mentors
- Mentors with good adult interpersonal skills as opposed to those who are great with kids but less effective with colleagues
- Frequent job-embedded feedback focused on instruction and delivered face-to-face
- Small mentor caseloads (no more than 10 teachers per mentor)
- Consistent data for program improvement

National Collaborative on Inclusive Principal Leadership released a new online resource, “Supporting Inclusive Schools for the Success of Each Child: A Guide for States on Principal Leadership” with 8 strategies

https://ccssoinclusiveprincipalsguide.org/state-strategies/?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

Let's go to an eyewitness...

Have you had staff quit due to difficult students/parents, or because of a due process hearing?

Minimizing “Crisis Quits”

Staff who resign because of a difficult student or parent situation, especially during due process hearings or litigation

- Intense, early support from not only building level staff, but face-to-face time with central office and legal staff
- Small tokens of support such as snacks and water, hand-written notes and positive quotes

Inclusion and Support

- Ensuring special ed positions are not stigmatized or less prestigious than other positions
- Include and highlight special ed positions in social events, teacher appreciation weeks, etc.

Other Creative Recruitment/Retention Solutions

Homegrown Approach

- Studies of rural and urban special education teachers show those who were recruited from the community stayed after graduation because of personal and family ties stayed teaching in districts longer than those who were new to the community
- Encourage middle and high school students to shadow teachers and work as helpers in special education classrooms.

Report from Special Correspondent Tim Harshbarger

MSD Lawrence Township Chief Human Resources Officer

- MSD Lawrence Township's new alternative certification program for non-certified staff through IUPUI
- 18 month program
- Classes taught in evenings at MSD Lawrence
- 12 student teachers will graduate December 2018
- 90% are teachers of color
- Barriers that stand in the way: Costs, credit recovery, student teaching
- No commitment to staying in district, but it's a ready talent pool
- Keep people employed while they're student teaching



Oklahoma Examples

- Fast track for special ed certification
- Pays special educators higher salaries than other teachers
- Expanding professional development opportunities
- Encouraging students to enter teaching profession (University of Oklahoma forgives portion of student loan debt if a graduate teaches for 4 years)

Sharing Best Practices

- Oklahoma: One-day boot camps for new special education directors that offers essential compliance and practical information
- Virginia: cohorts of school districts partner together to share best practices for finding and keeping effective teachers

Loan Forgiveness

- Federal Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program for teaching special education full-time in a low-income school for 5 years (1475 schools in Indiana qualified in 2017-18 school year- doesn't matter if the school doesn't qualify for all 5 years).
- Up to \$17,500 of federal loans forgiven if you taught children with disabilities that correspond to your area of special education training.

Loan Repayment

- Indiana Mental Health and Addiction Services Loan Repayment Assistance Program for social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health professionals
- <https://www.in.gov/fssa/dmha/2892.htm>

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Professional Development/ Training

Training for All

- Core Topics for paraprofessionals, SROs, bus drivers, nurses, media specialists/librarians, cafeteria workers, lay coaches/sponsors
- Staff may be on emergency permits or Transition to Teaching permits probably haven't had the level of training that other teachers have
- Take advantage of mediation or litigation to require training

Every Staff Member Must Know...

Core Topics

- FERPA/confidentiality
- Basic Special Education and Section 504 Procedures
- IEP provisions for students they serve
- *Principals and Building administrators* – understanding LRE, implementing IEPs with fidelity, discipline protections

Report from Special Correspondent Jill Lambert

Greenwood Community School Corporation, Director of Student Services

- Moved from large urban district (MSD Wayne) to suburban district (Greenwood) with a co-op (Earlywood Educational Services)
- “Every answer I give, I’m modeling a best practice”
- Monthly meetings with principals



“I try not to use the word ‘change’”



“What are the top ten things I constantly get asked about special education?”



Training Parents?

- Required to educate parents on procedural safeguards
- What training isn't required but would create a better system?
 - Educating parents about where to turn with a problem (director, advocate, etc.)
 - Complaint vs. due process hearing
 - Impact of a due process hearing (emphasizing this is suing the school)

Report from Special Correspondent Jill Lambert

- Consistent messaging
- Inviting parent advocate to participate



“I lead with every word that, right now, is important to me and my leadership style.”



“[Parents] aren’t barking at you, but they truly have an unmet need. And that unmet need is getting services for their child.”



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Thank you.